

AN  
Earnest Plea  
FOR  
P E A C E  
AND  
MODERATION  
IN A  
S E R M O N,  
PREACHED  
At Barnstaple in Devon to the Mi-  
nisters, and Others, occasionally there  
assembled, Octob. 17. 1660.

By MARTIN BLAKE B. D.

Bernardus de Modo vivendi, Serm. 41.  
*Necessaria est nobis virtus Concordiæ. Quod si Ego volo facere  
voluntatem meam, & iste suam, & ille suam, fiunt Di-  
visiones, oriuntur Lites, Iræ quoque & Rixæ, quæ sunt ope-  
ra Carnis, (sicut ait Apostolus) Qui talia agunt, Reg-  
num Dei non consequentur.*

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*To the Right Reverend Father*  
IN GOD  
JOHN Lord BISHOP  
OF  
EXON,

Grace and Peace through  
Jesus Christ.

Right Reverend,

 *Hile in a Charitab'e desire of the  
Churches and the whole Kingdoms  
Peace, I first meditated the matters  
treated of in these ensuing Papers, though but for  
the Excitation and Encouragement of a lesser  
Auditory ; and was afterwards perswaded, that  
if sent abroad, they might ( through the Divine  
A 2 Blessing )*

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

Blessing ) conduce in some measure to the benefit of more : I was thereupon willing to cast in this poor mite of mine into the common Treasury. For this cause, and merely to this end, without any ether respect that my heart knows, or any the least desire to gall or grieve the Spirits of any ; I do here humbly offer my Well-wishings of this kind, to the publick view, beseeching our Gracious God, the God of Love and Peace, so to blesse my weak ( but cordial ) endeavours, that they may find in the first place, acceptance with Him, and then ( through his power ) a prevalency with Them, who together with my Self ( though of the meaneſt and loweſt rank ) are concerned in this holy and great Affair.

It is not Ambition, but Reverence, that hath induced me to send them thus forth under Your Lordships Patronage, and so to transmit them ( as through Your hands ) to the Prudent Consideration of my Reverend Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry ; especially those whom it hath pleased God, and ( next under him ) our Dear Sovereign , to recommend unto Your Lordships care. Nor do I herein presume to give Instructions, or to prescribe Rules to them, that are in my own just esteem



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esteem so much my Betters, ( alas, who am I, that in so Grave and Venerable a Society of Learned men, should harbour but a thought of so doing? ) No, the bent of my Soul is, with a soft and gentle breath to quicken up their Holy Zeal, and humbly to beseech them ( every one in his Place and proper Station ) to imploy the choicest of their greater and more flourishing Abilities, toward the allaying of those unkindly heats, and the making up of those destructive breaches, which the irregular fancies of this loose age, ( through the just Judgement of God upon us for our sins ) have brought upon the Nation, to the downfull ( almost ) of our Religion, and consequently the undoing of this once flourishing, and ( let me speak it, on the one side without Envy, and without Flattery on the other ) truly Apostolical Church of England.

Unity in the Church, if founded upon Truth, is a sweet Ornament, and a great support: and truly, whatever some may conceive, I believe the wiser sort will Judge, that a decent and wholesome Uniformity is a special help, as to the first begetting, so to the constant preserving of that Unity. Whereas, on the other side, a Lawlesse Multiformity

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mity (such as that was which of late years hath born so great a sway, and by an impetuous violence carried down all before it) may justly be reputed among the greatest and soarest Enemies of that desirable accord, which Christianity perswades.

How Dolorous and Direfull the effects have been of this many-headed Monster, to the great disturbance of our Peace, and the dissolving (well-nigh) of that goodly Order which St. Paul commended in the Church at Colosse, chap. 2. 5. yea, and how much the Un-brotherly contending for some fancied particles of a Negative Superstition, in reference to the mere outward Administration of our Holy Things, hath sharpened, I say not only the Tongues and Pens, but the Swords and Pikes of the mis-guided Multitude, our own dear experience can sadly recompt, and the late twice-repeated Insurrection of a Rebellious Crew (whose design, it seems, was to have engaged us once more in a Desperate and Bloody War) doth sufficiently demonstrate.

The truth is, no better Fruit can be expected from such a Tree. And therefore, what lesse can the consideration hereof work in us, (after an humble Recognition and penitent Contrition, in reference

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

ference to our own manifold demerits ) than a Prudent and Zealous care of contributing what we can toward the Quenching of these unnatural and intestine Flames, together with our most instant and hearty Prayers unto Almighty God, for his Gracious Direction, and Fatherly Benediction, in and upon our diligence and endeavour that way. And, oh that it would please the Divine Goodnesse ( in whose hand are the hearts of all men ) so to enlighten our minds, and fasten our affections upon the Fundamental and Essential points of Faith and Godlinesse, that, laying aside these fierce disputes, and heart-dividing contentions about Circumstantial Niceties, we might all meet and joyn together in a Just and Peaceable Conformity, and so ( at once ) exercise our Piety to God, our Submission to Authority, and our affectionate respects of love and kindly assistance one towards another, ever studying ( as much as in us lies ) the preservation of the Unity of the Spirit, in the bond of Peace; the best and readiest way ( as wise men deem ) to silence the Clamours, prevent the Designs, and ( if the good pleasure of God be such ) to rectifie the Apprehensions, and reconcile the Hearts of the yet-remaining Sanballats, Tobiah,

ahs,

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ahs, and Gesheims of the time, who by force and fraud, do what they can to interrupt and hinder us ( as their Fathers sometime did that good Nehemiah ) in repairing the Ruines, and raising up the Walls of our English Jerusalem.

And in Order to all this, that Your Lordship and the rest, who labour under you in this part of the Spiritual Vineyard, may thrive and prosper in your Holy Undertakings, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ so Bless and Crown your actions with good successe, that his Name in all things may be glorified, his Truth settled, his Peace restored, your Souls blessed, and the whole Church every day more and more both comforted and enlarged! So prays,

My Lord,

From my Study  
in Barnstable, Jan.  
21. 1660.

Your most Humbly

devoted Servant,

*Martin Blake.*

Text.



Text. Psal. 122. 8, 9.

*For my Brethren and Companions sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy Good.*

**W**hen the people of Israel, after their coming out of Egypt, were yet in the way to Canaan, it pleased God by Moses to make known unto them his gracious purpose, that when they should be quietly seated in that promised Land, and be at rest from all their enemies round about, he would then appoint a Place, where to fix his Sanctuary, as you may read, *Deut. 12. 10. &c.* And accordingly his will was, that at some certain times of the year, (*viz.* at Easter, Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles) all the Males of the people should come up thither, to perform their religious services unto him, as you may see, *Deut. 16. 16.* compared with the former passage. So carefully did the Divine Wisdom project for the establishment of a well-ordered Uniformity of Religious Worship in a settled State, to prevent distractions, and to preserve Unity among the people.

After this, for the space of many hundred years, the Israelites (notwithstanding) remained in somewhat an unsettled condition ; and the Tabernacle, with the Ark,

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were



were oftentimes removed ( as in a state of migration ) from place to place, until the time of King *David*. So long it pleased God to exercise his peoples faith, and to hold them in an humble expectation of his performance.

But at length, when the season ( which God had fore-determined within himself ) was now at hand, it pleased him to make known unto *David*, that *Jerusalem* in the Tribe of *Judah* should be the City, and Mount *Sion* the place, where his Ark should rest, and where also he would have a Temple built unto his Name, as you may gather from those expressions of his, 1 *Chron.* 28. 11, 19. compared with *Psal.* 76. 1, 2. & 78. 67, 68. With much gladness did King *David* listen to this Oracle of God ; and accordingly he had it in his heart, to have performed the whole work himself in his own dayes : but being commanded of God to leave the building of the Temple to his sonne *Solomon*, that should succeed him, he contented himself as to that particular ; only he provided for it some materials aforehand ; and in the mean season addressed himself to bring up the Ark of the Testimony from the house of *Abinadab* ( where it then was ) unto *Jerusalem*, which from thenceforth became the solemn seat, both of Religion, and of the Kingdom. And here by the way we may observe the Piety and Zeal of this good King, in that, together with the well settling of the Civil State, he took into his Princely consideration the right ordering of affairs in reference to the Church and house of God.

Accordingly, he calls unto him the chosen men of *Israel*, and so with one unanimous consent they chearfully set upon the work. And although their first attempt miscarried, by reason of some failing in the manner, at which God was displeased : yet their second endeavours ( which were undertaken with better caution, and more regularity of Devotion ) obtained a better success ; for ( as we read, 2 *Sam.* 6. 15, &c. ) They brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet

trumpet, and set it in his place, in the midst of the Tabernacle that David had pitched for it. Their failing at the first time was, partly in that Uzzab, being but an ordinary Levite, presumed to touch the body of the Ark, which God allowed not to any but the Priests: and partly for that (in imitation of the Philistines) they carried the Ark upon a Cart, whereas God had required that it should not have been borne, but upon the shoulders of the Levites. The error in both these was now at this second time reformed, and so the work succeeded to content.\* So then, though the intentions of Men in meddling with the things of God be never so right, yet the success will not answer our desires, unless it be managed by such hands, as God hath called and consecrated to the work.

\* See

1 Chron.

15. 1, 2.

12. 13.

verses.

Well, now all is right, and on they go, as full of Joy as of Devotion: and to further them in both these, the King (as it is conceived by most Expositors) had furnished them aforehand with this Psalm, with a charge to sing it by the way, as the Ark of God was thus carrying up unto Jerusalem; and for this cause partly, and partly also (it may be) for that it was to be sung with an elevated voice, it was called a Psalm of Ascensions or Degrees.

An excellent Psalm indeed, and very apposite unto the occasion, whereupon it was composed. It is of a mixt kinde, as containing in it expressions of several sorts: for it begins with Joy and Exaltation; it goes on with Praise and Commendation; and then concludes, partly with Exhortation to the People, and partly with Protestation for his own particular.

The Exhortation takes up the two first verses wherein this good Prince professeth his joy for the gracious temper of his people, expressed in their chearfull forwardness, to frequent the place of Gods publick worship, and their resolution to be constant in their holy performances of that kinde. *I was glad* (saith he) *when*

they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord: our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. See here, how much a zealous and well ordered people in the matters of Gods worship do contribute to the comfort of their Prince: and how apt a good Prince is to rejoyce in their well-doing, especially of that kinde.

The commendation follows in the three next verses, and sets forth the praises of *Jerusalem* in a threefold reference, that is to say, First, to the unanimity and sweet agreement of the inhabitants among themselves, *Jerusalem* (saith he) *is built as a City that is compact together,* vers. 3. Secondly, to their devout and holy deportment towards God, *Thither* (saith he) *the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord,* vers. 4. Thirdly, to their care of Justice in the equal distribution of rewards, *For there* (saith he) *are set Thrones of judgement, the Thrones of the bouse of David,* vers. 5. Lo here, the three great Ornaments, and indeed the strong supports of a Kingdom, or Commonwealth, Love, Religion and Justice.

The exhortation, which he annexeth to both the former, is briefly sum'd up in the two next verses, wherein he adviseth them (every one in his place) to sollicite the Throne of Grace for the confirmation of this their sweet accord and prosperous condition, without being interrupted by any, either hostile opposition from without, or unbrotherly dissention from within. The first, in these words, *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem; they shall* (or as some read, *let them*) *prosper that love thee,* vers. 6. The second, in the next words, wherein he adviseth them to pray again, and say, *Peace be within thy walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces,* vers. 7. whence we may observe, that the favours which God indulgeth to a Church or State, are rendred the more comfortable and lasting by the blessing of Peace superadded to them; and that therefore in the midst of all our enjoyments, we must beg that blessing at Gods hand, yea and call in others

to concurre and joyn with us in their Devotions for that end.

In the last place, the Protestation, which King *David* maketh for himself, and wherewith he concludeth the whole Psalm, is fairly laid down in the two last verses, wherein he seriously declares his own hearty intentions to practise what he did advise, and to do in his own person what he would gladly should be done of others also. The inference is, as if he had thus said unto the people then about him, You may perceive by what I have already spoken, how greatly your forward zeal towards the house of God hath affected me to joy: and, I have laboured (as I could) to blow up that zeal of yours in a greater flame, partly by minding you of the manifold blessings of God upon this place; and partly by exhorting you (as much as in you lies) to promote the peace and welfare of it; that so, not only you for your own particulars, but your Posterity also after you, may live happily under the continuance of these mercies, and in your several successive generations all along enjoy this liberty of coming into Gods Courts, and partaking in his holy Ordinances. This I have urged: and yet, I would not herein be mis-understood, as if, while I call upon you for this performance, I my self would be exempted; or as if (in all this) I had no further aim, than only the securing of my own affairs: No surely, but I will joyn with you in this good work, and bring on the best of my endeavours for it: and that also, upon far other and better motives, than my own Personal or Domestical concernments. I can with truth enough say unto *Jerusalem* her self, for whom I plead before you, *For my Brethren and Companions sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee: because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy Good.* This I conceive to be the inference of these words upon the former: and from hence we may conclude the sweet temper and candid disposition of this godly Prince, in that, while he  
com-



commended so pious a duty to the observance of his people, he was no lesse forward to lead them to it by his own example.

And thus having brought you home to the words of my Text, let us now stay a while, and take a view of them as they lye; They are elegantly brought in by the way of Apostrophe, wherein this good King, though in the hearing of the people, doth yet for the while look off from them, and turn his speech unto *Jerusalem*, professing his hearty zeal for the promoting of her welfare, together with the motives inducing him thereunto. "They are in effect, as if in other words he had thus said, Thy inhabitants, O *Jerusalem*, and the rest of thy free Denisons, whose weal dependeth upon thy safety, are of my near and dear Relation. I look upon them, first as my *Brethren*, not in the flesh only, but in the faith; and then, as my *Companions*, not meerly in the participation of the same outward blessings, but in the profession and practise of the same holy Worship: and therefore, even for their sakes, as much as for my own, I will now say, *Peace be within thee*. Not only, Peace from without, by a blessed immunity from the violence of foreign Power; (though that also I wish) but Peace also within by a sweet accord and loving agreement of thy Children among themselves. Nay further yet, thou art (O *Salem*) the seat of Religion, the place where God hath set his holy Tabernacle, and the Ark of his presence, where also he gives forth his holy Oracles, and requireth our Service, and communicateth his Blessings unto us his people in a more special manner: and therefore, even in this regard, *Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will* (yet much more) *seek thy Good* Seek it (I say) not by my Prayers only, but by my endeavours too; not only my tongue, but my heart, yea my hand and all, shall contribute what they can toward thy preservation and wellfare." This is (as I conceive also) the true strain



strain of these words being indeed no other than a holy mixture of resolution and reason, while he sayes, *For my Brethren and Companions sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee, because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy Good.*

Words worthy to be written in Letters of Gold, and to be treasured up in our dearest remembrance, that so they may serve unto us as a pattern, whereby to regulate and square our practice: which also that we may the better do, let us see the particular expressions, as they are here couched in the Apostrophe of King David to his Jerusalem. First, he tells her what he will say, and what he is resolved to do in her behalf: What he will say, I will say now, *Peace be within thee*: what he will do, *I will seek thy good*. Her peace and wellfare is the main of his intendment; and for the compassing of that, he will bring on all his endeavour: he will not only wish well, but do well to his power: he will begin at the heart, but not rest there: all that he is, and all that he hath, shall be employed about it. Secondly, he acquaints her with the grounds and motives, whereupon he took this resolution to himself, and they are specially two; the one more civil, an Argument taken from Humanity, *For my Brethren and Companions sake*; the other more sacred, an Argument drawn from Religion and Piety, *Because of the house of the Lord our God*. These were (as indeed they thought) among the chiefest motives, which quickned him up to this performance, that is to say, a tender regard to the good of his Brethren, with whom he was in communion; and a hearty well-wishing to the thriving of Religion, and the service of God, in that place where he had his being.

By this time I hope you see in some measure, the drift and meaning of these words: I shall now proceed to make some Observations from the whole; and indeed (as you may perceive) the Text is very fruitfull in that kind; all which, if pressed, would seasonably conduce

to our instruction. But because the time, and the busi-  
 nesse which is to follow, will not permit me to insist up-  
 on many, I shall only (for this present) fasten upon one,  
 which you may take (if you please) in these words, *That,*  
*It is both the duty and property of a Godly man, to be affectio-*  
*nately zealous for the peace and welfare, as of the Church in*  
*general, so of that Church in special, to which (in a more im-*  
*mediate manner) he doth relate.* A point of needfull con-  
 sideration at all times, but especially now; and accord-  
 ingly I shall give you, first the proof of it, as by plain  
 testimony from the Scripture, so by many very pregnant  
 reasons from the Bowels of my Text; and then after a  
 short Application of the whole, commend both you and  
 all that hath been or shall be spoken by me, to the good  
 blessing of God. And the Lord for Christs sake so en-  
 able me to speak, and you to hear, that in the mutual  
 discharge of our several duties, his Name may be glorifi-  
 ed, his Church comforted, and our poor Souls edified.

First then, I say this is a good mans duty, such a duty  
 as I confesse we owe (in some sort) to the whole com-  
 munity of Mankind, for even they also (though in some-  
 what a larger sence) are our Brethren and Companions;  
 and it is likewise possible (if God will) that they may  
 be brought within the compasse of Gods house, and  
 therefore we may not altogether exclude them, either  
 from our well-wishing, or well-doing in their behalf,  
 as occasion shall present. The very Law of Humanity  
 doth oblige us to the contrary; But then, in a more  
 special manner, we owe all this to the Society of the  
 Saints, as those with whom we are more nearly linked,  
 and to whom we stand in a more intimate and dear Re-  
 lation. As therefore the bond of Nature prompts us  
 to do good unto all, so the bond of Grace calls upon us  
 to do our best for these, in a more singular regard.

This surely was the Judgement of St. Paul, as you  
 may see Gal. 6. 10. *As we have opportunity (saith he) let*  
*us do good unto all, but specially to them who are of the Household*  
*of*

of Faith. To the same purpose he speaketh, 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26, 27. where making a comparison between the natural body of a man, and the mystical body of Christ, he tells us, that as in the one, so in the other, there ought to be a reciprocal care of the *Members among themselves*, so that if one *Member suffer*, all the rest must suffer with it, and if one *Member be bad in honour*, all the rest must rejoice with it. And least any one should think the Apostle would advise what himself would not practice, see again in 2 Cor. 11. 28, 29. where he professeth, that he was daily taken up with the care of all Churches: Yea, so taken up, that he is bold to ask the Question, *who is weak* (saith he) *and I am not weak? who is offended, and I hurt not?* So then, you see how even the dearest and choicest of our affections must run out towards the Church in general, and to all the Members thereof, how distant soever from us in respect of place and habitation.

Now as for the particular Church, to which in a more immediate manner we do relate, we are all out as much indebted thereunto, as to the former: And accordingly, the very singularity of our love and care, of our desire and endeavour, toward the procuring of her good, must in like sort shew it self, to the utmost of our power.

I shall not insist here, upon that tenderneſſe of love which we owe unto our Parochial and Congregational Churches, call them how you will: but rather (as my Text leades me) reflect at present upon that love which is due from us to our Church National, whereof those lesser Societies are but as so many Leaves and Branches.

The Heathen Orator spoke home, and to the purpose in one respect, when he said, *Omnes omnium Charitates una Patria complectitur*. His meaning was, that all the sweet motives, and the dearest incentives to love, whether of Parents to their Children, of Children to their Parents, of married parties to their Mates, or of one familiar friend towards another, were fairly couched under this one Name, our Native Country. And if he were right in

so saying, how much more may I say the like of such a Countrey, where the saving Truths of God are received, where the faith and Religion of Jesus Christ is professed and maintained, and where God ( in that respect ) vouchsafes to own the whole Body of the Nation, as belonging to the Lot of his inheritance? Surely, which way soever we look, whether backward, to the time past; or forward, to the time to come; or else take a view of it in the present: we shall meet with many very strong and deep engagements to endear it in our love.

First, we shall look backward, since the time that God was pleased to dignifie this our native Countrey with the title of a Church, we shall finde it to have been the seat of our famous Progenitors, the Place wherein they dwelt and took delight, and wherein also ( during their continuance here ) they contrived and accomplished many things, the benefit whereof is now transmitted unto us. They built those houses, wherein we dwell; manured those fields, which we possesse; planted those Orchards and Gardens, whose delicacies, and walks, and many other sweet conveniences, we now enjoy. Here it was, that they first united into societie, and laid the foundation of wholesome Laws. Here it was, that they first received and embraced the Divine Oracles, and were thereupon admitted ( both for themselves and us ) into a sacred Covenant and League with God. Oh, the manifold and sweet blessings, that God by their hands hath conveyed unto us, even here, in this our native Country! And shall we not love the Place, and be solicitous for the preservation of those excellent blessings, especially spiritual, which our Progenitors held so dear, and which with so much care, and cost, and hazard to themselves they purchased for us, and have now bequeathed them to our enjoyment, as the desired fruit of all their prayers, studies, and endeavours?

Secondly, if we look forward, with an eye to them that shall succeed us, do we not all hope, that this our Country,



Countray, with all the comforts and commodities thereof, shall remain to our posterity, when we are gone? Nay, do we not desire, that all the happiness (both temporal, and spiritual) which either our Prayers can obtain, or our endeavours can procure, may be treasured and laid up here (as in a common Store-house) for them, whose persons we love as our own Souls, and in whose continued generations we expect to live (in some sort) when we are dead? Out of all doubt we do. And if so, then how can we better consult for their weal, than by studying the welfare of the Church and State, wherein all those desirable Things are to be had, and from whence alone we can conceive (in the Ordinary way of the Divine Providence) they can be transmitted to our Descendents?

Thirdly, if we take a view of this our Countray, and of the Church of God therein, as to the present time; I beseech you, which way can we turn our eyes, but we shall still meet with fresh inducements to more love?

Let us view it first in relation to our Contemporaries, our Brethren and Companions (as my Text stileth them) who do jointly live here, and sweetly converse with us, in the same nearness, both of habitation, and possession: and then, Oh the strong Cords of love, which (if we be not altogether unnatural) must needs take hold of us, while we are under the kindly thoughts of them! Let us sit down, and consider. What Arguments can we devise, whereby our love may be drawn out towards any, but we shall find them all here? Here is an Argument, first from common humanity; secondly from social converse and familiarity; thirdly from nearness of alliance or affinity; fourthly from a bond yet neerer than that, the bond of consanguinity; and lastly, from that which transcendeth all these, Religious Fraternity. Now, if all these be not Arguments for love, then surely King David was very wide, when he protested as in my Text, *For my Brethren and Companions sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee!*



Let us look upon it in the next place, with reference to our selves; and still the more we look, the more we shall be convinc'd, as to this particular. Our Native Countrey (so Churched as we see, and bless God for it) is the Place, where we drew in our first breath. Her womb it was that bare us, her breasts that suckled us, her Law's that civiliz'd us, her Religion that enabled us to become the Sons and Daughters of Almighty God. By her Ministry it was, that we were first inoculated into the heavenly Vine. It was here, that the light of the glorious Gospel did first shine upon us; that we first heard the pleasant voice of Christ; that the Spirit of Christ did first breath upon our Souls; that we first learned how to believe, repent, and amend our lives; and have all along enjoyed so many multiplyed and sweet-saving mercies, unto this day. In a word, whatsoever we are, or have, in order (I say not onely to our temporal welfare, but) to our eternal happiness, we owe it all to the rich bounty of God, as conveying and handing the same unto us by her means. And now, in consideration of all this, I leave you to conclude what grateful returns of filial Piety we owe to so indulgent a Mother. Thus then, you see it is no less than Duty.

I said also in the next place, that it is the property of a godly man so to do: And this likewise I shall evidence by instancing in the practise of those famous Worthies, that are gone before us in this kind. The time will not suffer me to insist upon very many, and therefore I shall onely touch upon a few.

And here, in the first place, I shall commend unto you the behaviour of those devout Jews under the Captivity of *Babylon*, who seeing the desolations of *Sion*, and the great interruption of Gods service there (during that time of their distress) were thereat so disconsolated in their hearts, that neglecting all the comforts which the place did (otherwise) afford them, they wholly abandoned themselves to sorrow, as you may see  
it

it very largely set forth in the 137th Psalm. There were in *Babylon* many pleasant Rivers, upon the sweet and flowry banks whereof they had the liberty to sit down, and recreate themselves ; they had also their harps and other instruments of musick, with which they were sufficiently skilled to make themselves merry, if they had listed so to do : but, alas ! no mirth would down with them, so long as their *Sion* was in distress. See how they vent their sorrows in the two first verses of that Psalm. *By the Rivers of Babylon ( say they ) there we sat down ; yea, we wept, when we remembered Sion : we hang'd our harpes upon the willow trees in the midst thereof.* And, notwithstanding they were urged by the Babylonians, to tune their voyces to their harps, and to sing them one of the songs of *Sion* ; yet they refused, saying, *How shall we sing the Lords Song in a strange Land ?* Nay, further yet, that you may see the tenderness of their affection to their native Country, observe how in the next words they break out and say (every one for himself) *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning : if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave unto the roose of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefest joy.*

My next instance shall be in the exemplary practise of that worthy *Nehemiah*, when the release from that captivity, though in some sort granted, was yet very much impeded by the adversaries of God, and of his Church. The story will tell you, how during that time, he behaved himself ; as namely how solicitous he was for the welfare of his Country, and how much he was saddened at the report of her calamity, as then it stood ; even so saddened, that the King *Artaxerxes* took notice of it, and demanded the reason why his countenance was so sad, seeing he was not sick ? O King ( said the good man ) live for ever ! why should not my countenance be sad, when the City, the Place of my Fathers Sepulchres, lyeth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire ? why *Nehemiah* for his part was well enough at ease ; he had favour, and pleasure, and honour ;  
and

and power enough, to sweeten and secure his own affaires; and being the Kings Cup bearer, he could not want the choicest wines, or other liquors, wherewith to make his heart glad. True, but yet all this could not keep either his countenance from being clouded, or his heart from being over-pressed with care and sorrow, while ( in the mean time ) the city of his Fathers Sepulchres was laid waste, and the Gates thereof were consumed with fire. *Jerusalem* was so pretious in his esteem, and he so zealously devoted to her welfare, that nothing seemed sweet to him, while her calamities were so bitter. Yea, and you shall find afterwards in the remainder of that story, that he gave not over here, but went on still solliciting the King in her behalf, till he had obtained from him, not only a free licence, but a large supply, for the building up of her walls, and the settling of her peace, which also he prosecuted and furthered to the utmost of his power.

I could instance in many others besides these two, as indeed the Scripture doth abound in such examples, and so likewise doth the after stories of the Church : but the time bids me hasten. Only by the way, let me remember you of the pious and charitable disposition of two or three more, towards the peace and welfare of Gods house. As, first of *Ambrose*, who perceiving the fire of contentions to be kindled in the Churches in his time, wished, that ( if the Lord would ) it might be quenched, though with his blood. Secondly of *Nazianzene*, who ( upon the like occasion ) declared himself contented to be cast ( *Jonas-like* ) into the Sea, so a publick calm might follow on it. Thirdly of a late godly Bishop of our own who ( when his soul sate hankering on his lips ) was heard to say, *Modò me moriente floreat Ecclesia; O yet, though I dye, may the Church live and flourish !*

Fair instances, all these ; and such, as do fully come up to the pattern in my text, as if each of them had said, *For my brethren and companions sake, I will now say, peace be within thee : because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seeke thy Good.* And

And now, Brethren, that I may conclude this exercise with a few words of exhortation, I beseech you let it not seem tedious, if I endeavour (as I may) to stir up your pure minds to a like gracious practise. And because the contrariety of opinions doth seem at this time to be the most apparent obstacle to the Churches peace, let me have your good leave to beseech you in the words of the Apostle, *Phil. 2: 1, 2, 3, 4. verses.* *If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of Love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind! Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man to his own things, but every man also on the things of others. The things of others, not to disturb them, but to settle them in Peace.*

Surely, our failing in this hath cost us dear; and now wisdom would, as well as piety, that we should apply our selves to better course. Remember, Brethren, what you have seen and felt under the late hellish broiles; as also, what was the first in-let to these horrid confusions, which had well-nigh over-whelmed both Church and State. Was it not our vain jangling about modes and foms, modes of Discipline, and forms of worship? was it not even this, that engaged, first our minds to discontent, then our tongues to clamour, then our pens to invective discourses, and at last our hands (*borresco referens*) to the barbarous and cruel shedding of innocent, loyal, yea and royal blood? Have we not found, how by these (as it were so many steps and staires) that cunning Artifex of mischief, I mean the Devil, attended with his numerous crew of politick Atheists, and croaking Locusts, have mounted themselves into the chair of Pestilence? Did not this give the first advantage to the enemies of God and our Religion, to introduce those strange Errors, wicked Heresies, and prodigious Blasphemies, which have of late times so swarmed and swayed among us? And shall we  
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yet be so unwise, as to foster and foment the cause of so great mischief? Ah my Brethren, is it not enough (indeed too much) that through rage and violence of impetuous hands (facilitated and strengthened by this means) we have seen our Houses rifled, our good Laws violated, our Holy Things prophaned, our Ancient Men slighted, our Persons abused, our Young Men killed, and our Dear Friends butchered before our faces, while in the mean season their poor Wives and harmless Children have been forced (through very fear of this cruelty) to hide themselves in solitary places, and as Persons undone and utterly despoiled of all their hopes and comforts in this world, to sit wringing their hands, and weeping one upon another, even to the breaking of their hearts, and the sighing out of their afflicted Souls from their weakned Bodies? I say, is it not enough, that we have seen and experimented all this, but that we will yet be so passionately inconsiderate, as to throw up again the same Ball of contention, and so make way for the acting of another Tragedie? What, hath God so compassionated our case, as to bring those overflowing waters once more within their Banks, and shall we yet again adventure to pull up the Sluces, and let in those fatal streams to the drowning of us all?

Now, I beseech you Brethren, even by that awful reverence which you owe to God your Father, whose loving kindness is better than life; by those dear bonds, wherein you stand obliged to the Lord Jesus your Mediator, who so freely shed his blood for your Redemption; by that filial regard, which you say (and I believe) you bear toward the Church your Mother, whose ruines cannot but follow upon your Divisions; by that precious Word and Truth of God, which is the great and onely Charter by which you hold; by the Graces of that one blessed Spirit, whereby you are quickned to a new, spiritual, and heavenly Life; and lastly, by all those other winning Arguments which I before alledged from Humanity, Amity, Affinity, Consanguinity.



sanguinity, and Christianity; that you would heartily incline to Peace and Love, and so study the composing of your minds, and the tempting of your will, together with your affections, passions, and expressions, that though your heads may (in some things of lesser moment) have different notions, yet your hearts may be one; and that you may say, and say truly, both of and to our English *Sion*, as it is here in my Text, *For our Brethren and Companions sakes we will now say, Peace be with-in thee: because of the House of the Lord our God, we will seek thy Good.* And to this end, among many other valuable considerations, which your own wisdoms can reflect upon, I do earnestly beg your practical assent unto these few Particulars, whereof some refer to Almighty God, some to your selves, and some to your Brethren.

In reference to Almighty God, I beg of you, that in the first place you would humble your selves under his hand, and lye low at his foot-stool, under the consideration of your miscarriages heretofore, in what kinde soever, and particularly of your failings this way among the rest. Secondly, that you would earnestly implore the Divine mercy, for his gracious pardon of all that his pure eyes have espied to be amiss in you to this very day, whether habitual deordinations, or actual deviations, in every respect. Thirdly, that you would petition him, out of his abundant goodness, to bestow upon you the Spirit of Wisdom, Humility, and Love. Of Wisdom, that you may discern rightly between things that differ, and lay no more stress upon the Conscience than Himself hath imposed. Of Humility, that you may, not onely know, but also keep within the bounds of your own station; and so, meekly and quietly submit your selves, where you owe obedience, agreeable to his Command. Of Love, that in all your demeanours you may be ever studious to observe that Golden Rule of the Apostle, wherein he calls upon us, to preserve the *Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*, Ephes. 4. 3.

De Bap-  
tis. lib. 3.  
cap. 16.

And this again, the rather, because (as St. *Augustine* plainly tells us) *Non habent Dei charitatem, qui non diligunt Ecclesiam unitatem*: They have not the Love of God, who do not love the Unity of the Church.

In reference to your selves, my hearty desire is, that you would practise your own Prayers, and bring on the best and choicest of your endeavours by all good means to compass that which you have prayed for. And, as tending hereunto, give me leave to present you with these ensuing Requests.

My first Request is, that you would distinguish between Theological Verities, and Problematical Queries: in which latter (you know) many learned and godly men have and may have apprehensions contrary to our Conceptions. And here, our Duty is, not to be too confident and forward in our own Determinations. We must remember, we are but men, and therefore not infallible, but subject (not seldom) to mistakes. And upon this ground, it will become us (as sober Christians) to be rather humbly modest, than peremptorily censorious.

My second Request is, that you would put a difference between the essentials of Religion, and the outward circumstantial administration of it: that is, between things of absolute necessity, as prescribed of God; and matters of indifference, wherein our lawful Superiours have a just power to interpose, for orders sake. And here we must remember, that in these latter (seeing God hath not laid either his Command or Prohibition) the Inferiour is bound to submit himself to his Superiour. It is so in the Family, and in the Common-wealth: And why not likewise in the Church?

My third Request is, that you would not believe, that, by the intervening Command of your Superiours about Things indifferent, you are any way abridged of your Christian Liberty. Your Liberty is the same still, as to the thing simply in it self considered; and so you are taught:

taught: onely your conformity to the Command of your Superiours is for the time (while the Command remaineth in force) of necessary observance: I say of necessary observance; for though the thing commanded be still (as it was before) in its own nature indifferent yet the use of it (for the time) becomes necessary to us by vertue of that higher Command of God, which, doth enjoin us (in such cases) to yield obedience to our Lawful Superiours.

My fourth Request is, that you would take heed, how under the supposed notion of Religion, you slip (ere you be well aware of it) into the guilt of Superstition. There is (you know) a two fold Superstition, the one affirmative, the other negative. Affirmative, when a man conceives himself obliged to this or that, as a thing intrinsically holy, which yet in its own nature is but arbitrary. Negative, when a man so judgeth of things arbitrary, as if (in the very nature of them) they were wicked and ungodly. And truly (for my part) I cannot say, which of these two is the greater Superstition. Onely, this I know, that in the second Commandment, where God forbids the worshipping of Images, there also he forbids the worshipping of Imaginations. And to say truth, what else are these Imaginations, than internal or mental Images, which the fancy of man contriveth and carveth within it self, and so sets them up as the object, or (at least) the Rule of Adoration?

My fifth Request is, that you would not hold your selves bound to maintain for ever what you have once said or done upon a mistaken ground: or that it will be any disparagement to your personal reput, if now (upon a true conviction) you recede from those practices, which formerly you both allowed in your selves, and pressed upon others. I fear, this hath been to many (I do not, I dare not say, it hath been so to you) a great obstruction to ingenuity. But, my Brethren, let us not deceive our selves; for certainly, what ever man

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may think, we cannot (in this case) better consult, either for our acceptance with God, or our credit with good men, than by professing our selves to be overcome of Truth. Indeed, this is not so much as a foil, as an honour; for, in being thus conquered, we our selves obtain a noble Victory. Let us reflect here upon that famous Worthy, the great *S. Augustine*, who purchased to himself no less venerable esteem in the Church of God by his Book of Retractions, than he had done formerly by his other Writings communicated by him to the world.

My sixth Request, as consequent upon the former, is, that you would not overmuch regard the applauses of the vulgar; or (it may be) the good opinion of some well meaning (but mistaking) Christians. Oh, this itch after Popular esteem is a thing of very evil consequence, and will surely hazard us (if not seasonably cured) to many inconveniences. Indeed, it will make us unfit to be Masters of our own judgement; yea, it will so weaken our sight, and for the present so blinde our eyes, that we shall not be able to discern Truth from Error, Peace from Faction, or the Lovers of Peace from the Troublers of our *Israel*.

These are the Requests, which I thought good at this time to present you with, in reference to your selves. I told you, there is somewhat else, which I would also beg at your hands in reference to others: and the Particulars are two.

First I would entreat, that in case you be not yet so cleerly satisfied, as to all your scruples, and in every circumstance, you would not however thereupon grow clamorous, & by that means endeavour to engage the multitude into the participation of your discontent. Consider, Brethren, if the mistake be on your side, your sin in so doing will be greatly aggravated, first in regard of the Power, which you disobey; secondly in regard of the Persons, whom you mislead; thirdly in regard of  
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your selves, by adventuring so far (in a disputable point) upon your own misapprehensions. But suppose ( and for ~~this~~ discourse sake, I but suppose it) suppose I say, you may be in the right, yet let me entreat you once more to consider, whether the thing (you contend for) be of that importance, as for the sake thereof to embroil a whole Church? Or whether (on the contrary) it be not an act of as great imprudence so to do, as for a man to burn his house, that he may ~~kill~~ roast an egg? Brethren, you know, that all Truths are not of the same alloy; and that therefore (as the case may be) some harmless and quiet mistakes in judgement may be (comparatively) better, than some unruly Truths. Surely, he was a wise man, and an Orthodox and well studied Divine \*, who *That* said, *Though I love Peace well, yet I love main Truths better: sweet na-* and again, on the other side, *Though I love all Truths well, tured and* yet I rather conceal a small Truth, than disturb the common *holy man* Peace. Remember I beseech you, the Truths, wherein *of precious* we all agree, are fundamental: and me thinks, our a *memory,* greement in them should tye us faster, than for every petty difference to fall asunder. Give me leave here to commend unto you that seasonable and wholsom advice of *Dr. Joseph* St. Paul, Philip. 3. 15, 16. where he saith, *Hall, late* Let us (as many *Bishop of* as be perfect) be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this also unto you. Nevertheless, whereto ye have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same thing. To be hot in our disputes about Supposals, and in the mean season (even by the violence of such disputes) to hinder the growth of Reals, Oh how unbecoming! how much better would it become us, in matters of this kind, to leave off contending, and to fall a supplicating, first to God, and then unto Authority, that all these obstacles and rubbs in the way of Peace, on either side, may be lovingly removed?

Brethren, we are now (thanks be to God for it) under the blessed influence of a gracious Prince, whose heart

(as we may gather from the effects) is composed and made up (as I may say) of Truth and Justice, of Love and Tenderess, to God and Man; To God, for the promoting of his Service; To Man, for the procuring of his Good: and how can we but hope for an answerable Care in him to settle Peace and unanimity among us, by a gracious condescension in things convenient to weaker spirits? Besides, under the Government of so good a Prince, you may rest assured, that no rational Expedient, which may really conduce to the Publick satisfaction of all sober and modest Christians, will be withheld: much less, the inditing (if need be) of a free, National, and well-composed Synod, if you will humbly wait the time for it. A fair way, I confess; and indeed a way which God hath blessed from the very infancy of the Church, toward the silencing of disputes, and the repressing of fires in this kind: which also our late Saintly Sovereign of dear and glorious memory (of whom, nor we, nor, as the Apostle sheweth it in a like case, *the world was worthy*) did Himself chalk out and recommend unto us in his last dying words, when his precious Soul was (as I may say) upon the wing toward his heavenly Rest. Now under the expectation of all this, I beseech you quiet your own minds, and let my words find acceptance with you, while I say (as *Joseph* sometime did unto his brethren) *See that you fall not out by the way.*

But secondly, there is one thing more, wherein I must needs crave your charitable endeavours: and that is, that you would not onely ~~thus~~ thus quit your selves, but also do your best to quiet others. As our Saviour said to *Peter*, upon another occasion, so shall my Exhortation be to every one of you, *Et tu conversus confirma Fratres*. In a common combustion, it is not enough to forbear the bringing of more fuel to maintain the fire: but every good Citizen must be forward to his power toward the quenching of the flame. Beloved, you cannot be ignorant, that there are (at this time) great thoughts of hearts for the Divisions  
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of our *Reuben*. Oh now, for the Spirit of meeknesse, humility, and love (such as was in *Abraham* and *Moses*) to intervene, and say as they did in effect. *Sirs, why do ye strive thus, seeing you are Brethren? Why do ye revile, and smite, and wound each other by your unseasonable janglings?* Even thus surely it would become us (each one in his place, and within the compass of his own Calling) to expostulate with our Brethren, and to endeavour (as we can) with a sweet and gentle calmness to allay the boisterous and tempestuous violence of hotter spirits, and with a grave and sober importunity to call them back (if possible) unto a right Christian moderation; that so, these sparks of contention (which are but in appearance) may dye away, and never have the power to kindle into a flame.

Give me leave here, as a hearty well-wisher, to the Churches Peace, to tread in the foot-steps of a gracious Soul now at Rest with God, and (upon this occasion) to revive the memory of that sweet and heavenly Spirit of holy *Augustine*, who, when he saw the bitter contentions between *Jerome* and *Ruffino* (two great and famous Doctors of the Church in his dayes) *Humili* (said he) *qui vos alicubi simul invenire non possum, &c.* Alas, that I can never find you two together! How would I fall at your feet? How would I embrace them, yea, and weep over them? How would I beseech you, either for other, and each for himself, both of you for the Church, and therein especially for those weak ones for whom Christ died, and who (not without their own great danger) do sed'y look on, and see you two thus fighting one against the other in this Theatre of the world? Lo here, the lovely temper, and peaceful disposition of this Holy Man: a pattern, well worth our imitation. Indeed, we have the opportunity, which (it seems) he missed, yea, and complained that he had it not: and therefore, let us do (at least) what he said he would do; let us beg and seek for Peace, as we would for life.

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For my own part, I do make it this day my humble Request unto you all; and could wish now (if possible) that my Ribs were as strong as Brass, and my voice as loud as Thunder, that the sound thereof might reach over the whole Land, to the kindly affecting every heart. But Almighty God (I trust) hath his Agents abroad: And may his Blessing make their labours fruitful?

In the mean season Brethren, as to you that are present, I shall conclude my plea for Peace and Moderation in a few words. It is to me an uncertain thing, whether I shall ever meet you thus again together in this place: God onely knows, but it is probable I never shall. And therefore (as if now taking my last leave of you) let me breath out the very longings of my Soul into your bosoms, and shut up all with the words of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. 11. *Finally (Brethren) Farewell! Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of Peace shall be with you.* To him, and to the Word of his Grace, I commend you: and he mercifully grant, that every one, who hath heard me this day, may comfortably return to his own home, *aut sanior, aut sanabilior!* either actually more sound, or (at the leastwise) in a nearer disposition to be made sound!

And even so, O Holy Father, so be it; for the sake of thy dear Son Jesus Christ! to whom, with thine own Majestie, and thy blessed Spirit, three Persons and one God, be all Glorie and Honour, Thanksgiving and Obedience, now and for ever, Amen.

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